United Nations A/HRC/28/NGO/39

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 February 2015

English only

Human Rights Council
Twenty-eighth session
Agenda item 4
Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 February 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.15-02932 (E)
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Iranian Women on the Path of Development and Advancement

The third MDG is on the "improvement of gender equality and empowerment of women" particularly through the eradication of gender inequality within primary and middle school education. The four indexes bellow are for the evaluation of the accomplishment of this goal. In this section it will be attempted to explain the changing trend in these indicators over the last few years, and deal with existing information in these indicators.

Indicator 9: ratio of girls to boys in primary, middle and higher education
Indicator 10: ratio of literate women to men of 15 to 24 years of age
Indicator 11: share of women's wages who work in non-agricultural sectors
Indicator 12: percentage of women members of the parliament

Indicator 9:
The women's education growth levels can be evaluated via the literacy rate indicator. In 1976, the literacy rate among women was only 36 percent in comparison to men at 59 percent, which indicated a 23 percent gap. In 1996 women's literacy rate increased to 72 percent and to 81 percent in 2006, and this gap was visibly reduced, dropping to 8 percent (men's literacy at 89 percent and women at 81 percent). According to statistics, today, women's literacy rate has surpassed 96 percent (Survey Centre of Iran).

Indicator 10:
Higher education in Iran, gradually and through the social acceptance of society, has continued to have a growing trend. In the 1978-79 education year, there were 175,675 university students, 30.8 percent of which were women students. The total number of state and private universities and higher education center students for 1996-97 reached 1,193,538 and women's share was 38.5 percent. In spite of this the total number of students in 2000-01 reached 1,577,000, 47.3 percent of which were women. In 2011, the number of students reached 4,117,208, 60 percent of which were women. In 2014 the total number of students in universities were 1,034,753, and 611,184 of which were women which indicates a rate of over 70 percent.

Indicator 11: Women's employment situation
As well as deeming employment as a basic and natural right for women and making the government to provide the necessary conditions for women's employment, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran stresses on women in having legitimate work, so that the basis for women's extensive appearance in the employment sectors and economic activities are prepared. Also Article 20 of the Constitution deems the equal use of all existing employment opportunities in the society as women's economic and social rights. Therefore women's employment has a special status within the domestic laws of Iran, including articles 3, 20, 21, 28, 29 and 43 of the Constitution, the Perspective Document of the Islamic Republic of Iran for 2025, Women's Rights and Responsibilities Charter, the Fourth and Fifth Development Programs and other laws.

The number of Iranian women active in the economy in 1986 was less than one million, the figure reached 1,630,000, and 1,765,000, in 1991 and 1996 respectively. And rose to 4 million in 2005. This increase in the number of employed women shows Iranian women's interest in working and participation in the economy side by side with men, and suitable and positive policy settings towards boosting the entrance of professional and literate workforce into the society. Because the majority of women in employment in Iran are literate. But in the years between 2006 till 2011 the number of working women dropped approximately by 900,000. This was due to the country's economic problems, and the negative effects of the unilateral economic sanctions imposed by the US and the European Union on Iran on the excuse of the country's nuclear activities.

In spite of this, according to published information from the general census of people and property in 2011, 30 percent of all working people were women, most of which worked in the public and governmental sectors.

Overall it can be said that civil servants in various aspects are women who have higher education and they are seen in university, justice department and ministries in various managerial levels.

Indicator 12: political participation of women
The participation level of women in various rounds of parliament was studied by the practice of women members of parliament from quantity and quality aspects.

In the quantity part the number of women members of parliament in relation to all members is low. In the first, second and third parliaments, women only took part from Tehran, but from the fourth parliament onwards we witness the participation of women candidates from the provincial towns, even small towns such as Samiram, Zabol, Sarab etc which indicate the sensitivity of women towards legislation and determination of their own future. It is hoped that this trend continues to grow.

From the quantity aspect, the number of women members of parliament in various commissions are as follows:

Commissions	Number
Social	5
Article 90 of the Constitution	7
Economic	3
National Security and Foreign Policy	6
Administrative and Recruitment Affairs	4
Judicial and Legal Affairs	5
Energy	1
Education and Research	9
Education and Training	4
Planning, Budget and Calculations	2
Health and Treatment	11
Councils and Domestic Affairs	1
Construction	1
Culture and Higher Education	4
Cultural	8
Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources	2
Hosing, City Development and Road Construction	1

MP Name, Union Field and the round of Parliament	Governmental Responsibilities
Marzieh Vahid Dastjesrdi member for Tehran in fourth and fifth parliaments	Health and Medical Treatment Minister in Ahmadinejad's cabinet
Hajer Tahriri Nik Sefat Member of the eighth parliament from Rasht union district	Operational Deputy for human Resources and deputy director for human resources of the presidency in Ahmadinejad's administration
Elham Aminzadeh, member of the seventh parliament for Tehran union district	Legal deputy of the presidency in the 11th government (Rowhani

Women representatives that have been present in the government
Women with key political positions

Shahla Molaverdi: Deputy president for Women's Affairs

Elham Aminzadeh: Deputy president for Legal Affairs
Maasoomeh Ebtekar: Deputy President for the Environment
Marzieh Afkham: Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson

Recommendations

1 - In view of the relative advancements that women have achieved in the social and political fields, attention must be made to two important factors which are proportion and distribution.

2 - The necessary basis for furthering the presence of women in social and political competition must be brought about and this requires culture building. It is through this that there will be no gender distinction in their decision making and selection of members of parliament.

3 - Increase of the number of women members of parliament will make their activities in the parliament's open sessions more highlighted. The quality of the performance of women members of parliaments depends on their further and more active presence and their suitable presence in friendship groups, parliamentary monitoring and etc. which can increase the parliamentary diplomacy capacity of Iran in interaction with Inter-parliamentary Unions of other counties.